

LONESTAR NEWS

SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION, 2BCT, 4ID
FOB KALSU, IRAQ



September 2006



Words from Lone Star 6

Ahlen (Hello),

Greetings to the friends and family of the Lonestars! I write to you with excitement and pride as we wrap up our tenth month here in Iraq. It is hard to believe we are entering October. I think it is safe to say that the last ten months have gone by both quickly *and* slowly, depending on who you talk to and what day it is. However, the one thing that everyone agrees on is the job well done so far, and the fact that we are going to do the best we can for the remaining few months.

September proved to be a quick but eventful and productive month. While conducting several key redeployment tasks, we also focused on training and missions, never forgetting our duties. The escort patrols to and from Camp Liberty continued without a hitch, with support from across the battalion. These patrols are a testimony to the diversity and growth of our battalion; as over the months many Soldiers have played key roles in the patrols, and each patrol builds on the last, learning lessons and sharing them with others.

Bravo company had an enormous task this month – one of moving a platoon of their Soldiers from FOB Duke to FOB Kalsu, in preparation for redeployment. In true Bulldog fashion, the move went off without a hitch and the team is together for the final months. Bravo company did a tremendous job during their split based operation during the past 10 months, providing support across the battlefield. I know they will finish strong together at Kalsu, providing communications for the brigade until they turn over operations to the incoming unit.

The MiTT had another significant month working with the Iraqis. Whether they were conducting combined raids with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police or meeting with the Babil Police Chief and the Babil Provincial Governor, the MiTT never slowed down. Also, several Soldiers, such as the mechanics, have gotten the opportunity to work at the REO with the MiTT and mix up the team a bit.



LTC Muraski and CSM Curtice present the Combat Action Badge to 1LT Gardner

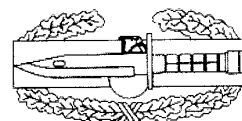
September Promotions

PFC Linda Burton (HHC)
PFC Lee Her (B Co)
PFC William Wilson (B Co)
SGT Timothy Mekosh (HHC)
SGT Britney Holland (A Co)
SGT Justin Harshner (A Co)
SGT Andrew Pershing (A Co)
SGT Jacob Thompson (HHC)

September Awards

MAJ Christopher Beck (CAB)
1LT Kristopher Gardner (CAB)
1LT Demere Kasper (CAB)
1LT Laura Prakash (CAB)
2LT S. Mohapatra (CAB)
CSM Carl Curtice (CAB)
SFC Daniel Lazaro (CAB)
SSG Daniel Killion (CAB)
SSG Steven Knight (CAB)
SSG Vungh Waan (CAB)
SGT Craig Daniel (CAB)
SGT Carma Leban (CAB)
SGT Eric McDonald (CAB)
SGT Ingrid Pierce (CAB)
SGT Ezequiel Porras (CAB)
SGT Sami Shepherd (CAB)
SGT V. Thompson (CAB)
SPC Eric Beaulieu (CAB)

SPC Derrick Hensley (CAB)
SPC Bennie Holland (CAB)
SPC Anthony Kant (CAB)
SPC Richard Lancaster (CMB)
SPC Larry Marshall (CAB)
SPC Luis Morales (CIB)
SPC Brian Ortiz (CAB)
SPC Jose Pinto (CAB)
SPC Andrew Reeves (CAB)
SPC Benjamin Saliba (CAB)
SPC Sabrinna Steward (CAB)
SPC Shaun Weigold (CAB)
PFC Jake Stopp (CIB)
PV2 Paul Lewis (CAB)
PV2 Cody Musson (CAB)



The Stalkers continued to support the Brigade across the battlefield, with Soldiers in Diwaniyah, in addition to manning a secret squirrel tasking in Mahmudiyah. A Co managed a good balance between work and recreation, as they continued in their football and sports competitions, along with continuing their company movie nights. The Stalkers have impressed me with their desire to always achieve more, as they continually strive to get their Soldiers promoted, awarded, and properly recognized. They have dominated the promotion boards during the deployment, and in turn, their Soldiers have stepped into key leadership roles.

The Hurricanes, as usual, were incredibly busy this month. Their biggest endeavor was running the Weapons Olympics, which allowed each Soldier to get better trained on assembling, disassembling, and firing their weapons. The effort put into the event yielded great benefits, as now our Soldiers are more confident in their weapons and themselves. HHC is facing the arduous task of redeployment, however, it is inspiring to see that they have not let the basic Soldier skills go by the wayside.

As I have mentioned several times, the process of getting all of our Soldiers and equipment home has begun and redeployment is pending. I encourage each of you to understand the time and work demands that come with this process, but know that these efforts are necessary for a successful and safe return home. In only a few short weeks, we will be sending our first group of STB Soldiers home to prepare the way for the rest of us. For the first weeks that we are back, there will be several mandatory classes and processes that each Soldier must go through. Be prepared to have your loved ones busy at first. However, as of now, our block leave dates are scheduled for December 4th to January 2nd. The majority of our Soldiers will be able to take leave at that time, however, stay flexible. Also, looking a bit farther out, our battalion formal ball is scheduled for February 15th, and we would love to see all Soldiers and spouses there if possible. It will be a great opportunity to look back on our year together and recognize our Soldiers for their hard work.

In closing, we have truly become one big family over the past ten months. I can vividly remember the day we deployed, as we said goodbye to our families at home and looked toward a year with our big family, the STB. Over here we have formed bonds that will last a lifetime, and I can not say enough that I am honored and blessed to work side-by-side with each Lonestar this year.

Take care and stay strong, God bless, and see you soon.

First In!

LTC R. J. Muraski Jr.

"Lonestar 6"

STB (Rear)

Special Troops Battalion rear continues to support forward soldiers and families and prepare for our Battalion's redeployment.

The Virtual FRG website is up and running! Please register and visit our new Battalion website. Go to www.armyfrg.org

Reintegration Training for Spouses:

Oct 17th 9am-12pm

Oct 19th 6pm – 8pm

Nov 13th 3pm-5pm

Nov 14th 6pm-8pm

Helpful Numbers

Battalion Staff Duty: 288-7748 / 288-3592

Army Community Service: 287-3726

Military ONESOURCE: 1-800-342-9647

*New Command Financial Specialist representative for STB: SSG Jason at 288-0363

LONESTAR!

CPT Audry Townsell

LONESTAR 6R



LTC Muraski takes training with the Iraqi Army to the next level as he wears their traditional garb and now speaks more Arabic than English

(note: He's really preparing to help the MPs practice extracting an unruly detainee from a detention cell)

HHC Hurricanes

This past month of September has been extremely active for the Hurricanes. The MP Platoon experienced another surge in detainees. Although it didn't break the old record, it was merely one short. The results were the same however: several Soldiers stood up and contributed greatly to the added load and the surge was handled without a hitch. This month SGT Beasley, the resident corrections expert, also conducted another 40 hour block of instruction for our newest Bravo Company augments. His expertise in the area always ensures that anyone assigned to the DHA is highly trained for the mission they are about to undertake. SGT Pua created an innovative procedure for detainee latrine calls, shaving the time spent by our Soldiers to escort them by half. Also this month, the Islamic religious month of Ramadan began. Being the considerate Army that we are, the entire platoon went through extra classes to inform the Soldiers of cultural practices that needed to be considered so as not to deprive the detainees of their religious beliefs. One thing's for sure, the entire platoon is looking forward to seeing all of their loved ones once again.

Meanwhile spread out over the FOB, the mechanics of Support Platoon have spent this last month prepping vehicles, tracks, and generators for the upcoming turnover. In a typical month, roughly four to six annual services are conducted. This past month, the mechanics completed 40 services. SPC Pinto constantly was on the move verifying faults and conducting maintenance on four companies worth of stationary vehicles; a task requiring three Soldiers. SPC Compton answered several emergency repair requests from the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Platoon, allowing them to make their flight times. SGT Ellis, SGT Cowell, and SPC Bass, the three-man generator team for the battalion and Brigade headquarters, constantly ensured that the generators for the Brigade TOC, TUAV and Signal sites were providing juice to support their operations. SPC Hensley and PFC Camp serviced eight tracked vehicles for Brigade headquarters maintaining their combat readiness at all times. And at the equipment ordering section (PLL), SGT Brown, the newly promoted SGT Thompson, and PFC Nguyen turned in a two-week record of 200 lines of Class IX parts ordered, bringing in nearly \$2 million back into Brigade's budget. Also this month, SPC Castaneda and SPC Rhome performed very well at the Sergeant's Board. And to top it off, SGT Wilken and SPC Dickerson received impact Army Commendation Medals for their specialty welding services that they have provided for many of the units out here. Oh and we can't forget about the cooks! They have continued to provide force protection at the dining facility with hearty greetings at the front entrance and behind-the-scenes food inspections to ensure proper food handling procedures. All in all, Support Platoon has performed remarkably to maintain equipment and people so they are all fully mission capable.

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As a whole, the company has spent the past few weeks competing in the Weapons Olympics. We have conducted platoon-level training on all our weapons systems. Our expert firers and fastest disassembly / assembly Soldiers are now competing at the company-level. So far, we have run two weeks worth of ranges for the M16, M249, M240B, and M2 giving Soldiers a chance to fire weapons they never before have touched. There are 16 contenders from both platoons and headquarters section. In the end, we'll all be winners as the time fast approaches for us going home and seeing our much missed families!

Hurricane 6



MAJ Craft and CSM Curtice present impact ARCOMs to SPC Dickerson and SGT Wilken



SSG Killion and SGT Pierce work together to download tents in Balad

Alpha Company Stalkers

Dear Family, Friends & Soldiers of the Lonestars & Stalkers,

This month has been a busy one for the Stalkers. LT Aptaker has been working as the MITT's S2 in the absence of CPT Johnson and enjoying his time at the REO. LT Prakash is filling in as Executive Officer as well as keeping up with her Fox Recon Platoon. The SIGINTers continue to learn new technology in their trade and improve upon the ways they can support the fight while the TUAV Platoon has increased capabilities now that they have all of their Soldiers returned from leave. The HUMINT Platoon stays busy as usual, but Chief Colbert is very happy to have SFC Cross back from leave to assist in handling the workload.

Business is picking up as we begin moving pieces around in preparation for redeployment. Soon we will begin to send some Stalkers home; something we've all been looking forward to. Until then the pace on the Stalkers will only increase as we owe it to our replacements to ensure all the things we've learned during our year here they won't have to learn in action. As we go through October we will be getting them spun up on how we've ran operations here as well as cleaning and packing up our gear. Also, as I continuously remind all Stalkers, we must maintain vigilance and make sure that no one is smelling the barn just yet. We can relax when our boots are on the ground in Texas and our loved ones are in our arms.

As the pace picks up FOB Kalsu is undergoing tremendous changes as it continues to grow. Two more battalions are joining the already present units on FOB Kalsu putting a slight strain on resources. What this means in the short term is longer lines for Soldiers at the phone and internet stations as well the post office. The Stalkers remain active even in the midst of business as the football games continue and several of us will participate in the upcoming FOB Kalsu 10 Miler in October.



SPC Reeves (L) & Whippo (R) aka the famed "wondertwins" of IEW caught playing with the air compressor.

We've had some moments to be proud of since the last Newsletter; SSG Wehry of the TUAV Platoon re-enlisted; a great thing for the Army! We promoted three outstanding HUMINTers to Sergeant; SGT Harshner, SGT Brittney Holland and SGT Frohberg and we observed the entire IEW Shop, SSG Glassow, SGT Storey, SPC Whippo, SPC Reeves, SPC Ibarra (who is actually in Bravo Company), and SSG Grayson receive coins from the Brigade Commander for their outstanding support to the Team.

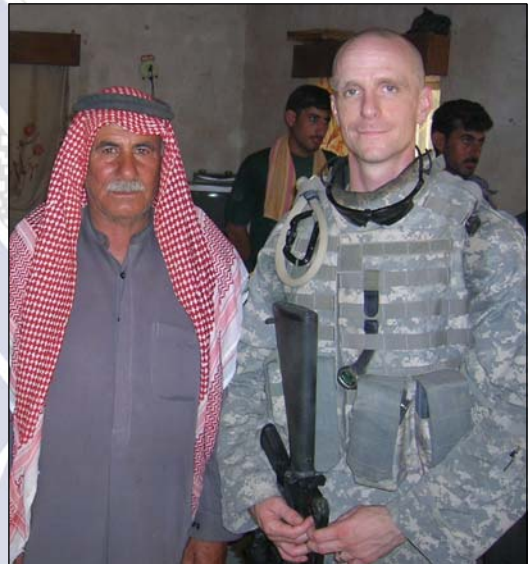
Stalker September birthdays include SFC Lazaro of Recon and SPC Arons of TUAV Platoon! An early Happy Anniversary wish is sent out to my lovely wife Andrea! We were married on October 10, 2005 and though we'll be physically apart for our first anniversary we will be together spiritually.

~Thank you all so much for your commitment and support of the Team!

CPT Wayne Prince

-STALKER 6

ALWAYS OUT FRONT!



SSG Knight takes a photo with a local friend of Coalition Forces.



SGT Choi rides in a UH-60

Bravo Company Bulldogs

Greetings from Iraq, September proved to be another busy month for the Bulldogs and one month closer to redeployment. We completed our mission at FOB Duke, safely bringing all Soldiers back after a job well done. We had 6 Soldiers go the promotion board and receive recommendation for promotion, while we promoted two Soldiers to the rank of PFC. We prepared for our transition with the incoming Signal Company by cleaning and checking our equipment and getting it ready for turnover. The men and women of Bravo Company have done an outstanding job of working together to accomplish any mission, and that enabled them to provide outstanding network support to the brigade combat team, while preparing for the upcoming transition and executing all additional tasks without any issues.

This month we sent six Specialists to the E-5 promotion board, and they each did an excellent job. We are proud to say that SPC Beachley, SPC Deedon, SPC Dewaay, SPC Gibbs, SPC Rubilar, and SPC Wiegmann were all recommended for promotion, and we look forward to promoting them soon. We are also were happy to promote PVT Her and PVT Wilson to PFC. We presented the Good Conduct medal to SGT Holland, SGT London, SPC Cadena, SPC Curl, SPC Edgar, SPC Gray, SPC Hintz, and SPC Rubilar.

First Platoon smoothly transitioned all their communications equipment from FOB Duke to FOB Kalsu, while providing customer support until the day they departed. The transition was a team effort, in which they identified non-essential systems to send forward, keeping only the minimum critical systems at Duke. This marks the successful completion of their mission of providing voice and data communications to FOB Duke, and the beginning of their mission of preparing for our upcoming transfer of authority with 4BCT, 25th ID.

Second Platoon continued to maintain the communications network at FOB Kalsu, while also preparing their equipment for the transition. This month marked a significant increase in the customers supported by their JNN, as they have incorporated 204th Support Battalion and have also begun supporting the 3-16 Field Artillery Battalion. Some members of 2nd Platoon were able to participate in the Marine Corp Martial Arts Program as they trained for their Grey Belt.

Headquarters Platoon took the lead in sending patrols to Baghdad, with their new team SGT Boellaard, SPC Holland, and SPC Rubilar. They conducted 8 patrols this month, turning in parts for repair, and picking up key equipment. The NETOPS section conducted some network modifications, and prepared for an upcoming classroom and hands-on training event with the FOB Duke JNN. LT Hampton, the company executive officer, and SSG Smith, my supply sergeant conducted some important supply transactions, signing for equipment from Baghdad and the Regional Embassy Office in Al Hillah, while turning other items over at Camp Anaconda, Balad. Their hard work in supply has set us up for transferring our equipment and a smooth redeployment.

As we wrap up another month, I just wanted to thank our families, friends and the FRG for your support. We begin our last full month of deployment eager to finish our mission here and be reunited with you soon. We know this year has been a difficult year for many in 2BCT, and we remember those we have lost in our efforts to bring peace and stability to this region. We acknowledge your sacrifices at home and all the hard work you do to support our efforts here. We greatly appreciate all that you do, and we realize we could not do it without you. We look forward to seeing you very soon.

CPT Nate Saul



SPC Crowe kicks LT Townsell without getting an Article 15 in Marine Corps Martial Arts

